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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights in the administration of justice

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

In its resolution 69/172 on human rights in the administration of justice, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on the latest developments, challenges and good practices in human rights in the administration of justice and on the activities undertaken by the United Nations system as a whole.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline to accurately reflect the most recent information received from Member States.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/172 on human rights in the administration of justice, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on the latest developments, challenges and good practices in human rights in the administration of justice and on the activities undertaken by the United Nations system as a whole.

2. Issues relating to the death penalty and transitional justice are intimately related to human rights in the administration of justice but are not addressed in detail in the present report because they are covered in specific reports on these topics[1] to the Human Rights Council or the General Assembly.

II. Challenges in human rights in the administration of justice and related recent developments

3. Following the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/166, the most recent report of the Secretary-General on human rights in the administration of justice (A/68/261) was focused on an analysis of the international legal framework for the protection of all persons deprived of their liberty. The most recent report of the Secretary-General providing a general update on developments in relation to human rights in the administration of justice was submitted at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, in 2012 (A/67/260). Outlined in the present section are some of the main human rights challenges in the administration of justice and the relevant recent developments since the issuance of the report of 2012.

A. Access to justice

Access to justice and the protection rights

4. International human rights law recognizes a clear right to an effective remedy for persons whose rights or freedoms have been violated.[2] During the reporting period, several human rights bodies highlighted the important role of access to justice in the legal protection of human rights in general, but also focusing on protection from specific violations. Human rights mechanisms also provided guidance on the interpretation and implementation of access to justice.

5. In 2012, the Committee against Torture adopted its general comment No. 3 (2012) on the implementation of article 14 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by States parties (CAT/C/GC/3). The Committee clarifies therein the content and scope of obligations under article 14 of the Convention, which ensures access to the legal system for victims of torture and provides for an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation. According to the general comment, the term "redress" in article 14

[1] See, for example, A/HRC/27/21 and the report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/186 (A/71/332).

[2] See, for example, article 2, paragraph 3, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

encompasses the concepts of "effective remedy" and "reparation". The Committee also sets out therein the procedural obligations required to adequately implement the right to redress, in particular access for victims to effective mechanisms for complaints and investigations.

6. In 2014, the Human Rights Committee adopted general comment No. 35 (2014) on liberty and security of person (article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) (CCPR/C/GC/35), in which, among other things, it sets out how access to justice can ensure protection from arbitrary detention. It details the obligations of States in relation to the judicial control of detention, in particular the meaning of the right to be promptly brought before a judge, the entitlement to trial within a reasonable time and limitations to pretrial detention. The Committee also provides guidance on how to implement the right of persons deprived of their liberty to take proceedings for release from unlawful detention.

7. In its general comment No. 2 (2013) on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families (CMW/C/GC/2), the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families identifies limited access to justice as a factor making such persons more vulnerable to labour and other types of exploitation and abuse. The Committee recommends therein that States conclude bilateral agreements to ensure that migrant workers who return to their State of origin may have access to justice in the State of employment in labour-related cases involving complaints of abuse or claims of unpaid wages and benefits.

8. In 2016, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted its general comment No. 23 (2016) on the right to just and favourable conditions of work (article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (E/C.12/GC/23), in which it acknowledges the importance of access to justice, including through the availability of free legal aid to ensure just and favourable working conditions.

Access to justice for specific groups

9. In 2014, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law (article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) (CRPD/C/GC/1), in which it underscores that every human being possesses legal personality and that recognition of legal capacity is inextricably linked to the enjoyment of many other human rights, such as the right to access to justice and the right to be free from involuntary detention, including in a mental health facility.

10. On 11 April 2014, the Committee adopted its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility (article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) (CRPD/C/GC/2), addressing the issue of accessibility as a precondition for ensuring administration of justice in relation to persons with disabilities. The Committee states therein that there can be no effective access to justice for persons with disabilities if the buildings of law enforcement and the judiciary are not physically accessible, or if the services, information and communication that they provide are inaccessible.

11. In its general comment No. 2, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families also recognizes that migrant workers in irregular situations generally live in fear of being reported to the immigration authorities, which severely limits their access to justice, making such persons more vulnerable to labour and other types of exploitation and abuse.

12. In 2013, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights (CRC/C/GC/16), in which it makes several recommendations highly relevant to the administration of justice. The Committee provides that States should work to remove social, economic and juridical barriers to ensure that children have access to effective judicial mechanisms without discrimination. In particular, children and their representatives should be provided with information about remedies through various means, such as school curricula, youth centres and community-based programmes. The Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers has also recently addressed issues relating to children's rights in the justice system (see A/HRC/29/26 and Corr.1).

13. In 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted joint general recommendation No. 31/general comment No. 18 on harmful practices (2014) (CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18), in which issues relating to the administration of justice are addressed. The Committees note that access to justice for victims of harmful practices is denied or limited owing to prejudices and weak capacity to address the rights of women and children among judges in customary and religious courts or traditional adjudication mechanisms, and the belief that matters falling within the purview of such customary systems should not be subjected to review or scrutiny by the State or other judicial bodies. Victims seeking justice often face stigmatization, a risk of revictimization, harassment and possible retribution, and steps must be taken to protect the rights of women and girls throughout the legal process.

14. In 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice (CEDAW/C/GC/33). The Committee highlights various factors that make it more difficult for women to gain access to justice, including trafficking, armed conflict, status as an asylum seeker, migration, the criminalization of prostitution and geographical remoteness. The Committee highlights six interrelated and essential components to ensure access to justice: justiciability, availability, accessibility, good quality, provision of remedies for victims and accountability of justice systems.

15. During the reporting period, the Committee also made other detailed recommendations regarding women's access to justice. In its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30), the Committee cautions that barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice before national courts before conflict are exacerbated during conflict and persist in the post-conflict period. The Committee also recommends that gender-sensitive investigative procedures be used to address gender-based violence. It recommends the enhancement of women's access to justice, including through the provision of legal aid and the establishment of specialized courts, such as domestic violence and family courts, and by providing

mobile courts for camps, settlements and remote areas, and also recommends that protection for victims and witnesses be ensured.

16. In 2016, the Committee adopted its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women (CEDAW/C/GC/34), in which the need to ensure physical access to courts and other justice systems, especially for rural women, is highlighted, as are other major issues hindering rural women's access to justice, such as a lack of information and sociocultural constraints.

17. In June 2014, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, presented the basic principles on the right to an effective remedy for victims of trafficking in persons (see A/HRC/26/18, annex). In the thematic report for 2016 to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/32/41), the Special Rapporteur addressed trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict situations and focused on protecting victims of trafficking and people at risk of trafficking, especially women and children, highlighting the importance of access to justice and the need to prosecute all forms of trafficking.

18. In 2015, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues submitted her annual report to the General Assembly (A/70/212), in which she focused on minorities in the criminal justice system, including as victims and witnesses. In particular, she considered obstacles to access to justice faced by minority victims of crime. The Special Rapporteur has also been requested by the Human Rights Council (resolutions 6/15 and 19/23) to guide the work of the Forum on Minority Issues, prepare its annual meetings and report on the recommendations of the Forum. The eighth session of the Forum, held in Geneva on 24 and 25 November 2015, was focused on the theme "Minorities in the criminal justice system". In 2016, the Special Rapporteur submitted the recommendations produced by the Forum, including some relating to access to justice for minorities, to the Council (see A/HRC/31/72).

B. Legal aid

19. During the reporting period, several human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders continued to work on the question of access to legal aid, as a component of the right to access to justice for victims, as well as the right to a lawyer in the criminal justice system. The thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers for 2013 (A/HRC/23/43 and Corr.1) was focused on the issue of legal aid, including the applicable normative framework. Several recommendations for the implementation of a legal aid system were formulated. The Committee on the Rights of the Child stated in its general comment No. 16 that children should be allowed to initiate proceedings and have access to legal aid and the support of lawyers in bringing cases against business enterprises.

20. The United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems were adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2012 (see resolution 67/187, annex). The Principles include the recognition of legal aid as an essential component of the criminal justice systems and related responsibilities of States; equity and non-discrimination in the provision of legal aid; independence and protection of legal aid providers; and the competency and accountability of legal aid providers. The Guidelines cover a wide range of issues,

including the right to be informed of legal aid, legal aid at the pretrial stage, during court proceedings and at the post-trial stage, the implementation and funding of a nationwide legal aid programme and practical issues such as the recourse to paralegals and partnerships with non-State legal aid service providers and universities.

C. Rights of persons deprived of their liberty

21. The protection of the rights of persons deprived of their liberty remains a particular challenge for respect for human rights in the administration of justice. While a comprehensive legal framework exists, the main challenges lie with the effective implementation of the norms and standards at the national level (see A/68/261). To assist States in this endeavour, human rights mechanisms worked on this issue throughout the reporting period.

22. In November 2012, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted its deliberation No. 9 concerning the definition and scope of arbitrary deprivation of liberty under customary international law (see A/HRC/22/44, sect. III). In its annual report for 2013, the Working Group touched upon issues relating to military justice, overincarceration and protective custody (A/HRC/27/48). The Working Group addressed in its annual report for 2014 (A/HRC/30/36), among other things, the thematic issues of drug policies and arbitrary detention, peaceful protests and arbitrary detention and remedies for arbitrary detention.

23. In its general comment No. 35, the Human Rights Committee clarifies the meaning of the terms "arrest" and "detention" and analyses contexts in which arbitrary detention may occur, including criminal justice, immigration detention, mental health and security detention. It provides examples of practices that may amount to arbitrary detention. The Committee also details the obligations of States in relation to the judicial control of detention, in particular the meaning of the right to be promptly brought before a judge, the entitlement to trial within a reasonable time and limitations to pretrial detention. The Committee also provides guidance on how to implement the right for persons deprived of their liberty to take proceedings for release from unlawful detention.

24. In its resolution 20/16, the Human Rights Council requested the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to prepare draft basic principles and guidelines on remedies and procedures on the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty by arrest or detention to bring proceedings before a court, so that the court might decide without delay on the lawfulness of his or her detention, and order his or her release if the detention was not lawful, with the aim of assisting Member States in fulfilling their obligation to avoid the arbitrary deprivation of liberty in compliance with international human rights law. In 2015, the Working Group adopted the final version of the United Nations Basic Principles and Guidelines on Remedies and Procedures on the Right of Anyone Deprived of Their Liberty to Bring Proceedings Before a Court (see A/HRC/30/37, annex), which are intended to provide States with guidance on fulfilling, in compliance with international law, their obligation to avoid the arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

25. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) were adopted by the General Assembly on

17 December 2015 (see resolution 70/175, annex), following a four-year review process by the Commission on Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention. As a result of the review process, the Nelson Mandela Rules now contain 122 rules that reflect human rights and criminal justice standards. The revision focused on rules pertaining to the respect of the prisoner's inherent dignity; medical and health services; disciplinary actions and sanctions; the investigations of deaths and serious injury in detention as well as signs or allegations of acts of torture or other cruel and inhuman treatment; the protection and special needs of vulnerable groups in detention; the right to legal representation; complaints and independent inspection; and the training of prison staff.

D. Overincarceration

26. With more than 10.2 million people around the world being deprived of their liberty, according to recent statistics,[3] and a significant number of countries in which prisons are overcrowded,[4] the excessive recourse to incarceration remains one of the major challenges in the administration of justice. The human rights impact of overincarceration and overcrowding was examined in detail in a recent report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/30/19). In addition, it is important to note that the lack of respect for human rights in the administration of justice also results in overincarceration. An effective criminal justice system with all actors, including police, prosecution, defence and judiciary, working in accordance with the rule of law and international human rights law is necessary to ensure that the rights of all persons who come into contact with this system are protected (see A/HRC/25/60/Add.1, para. 84). Nevertheless, criminal justice systems around the world encounter major challenges and shortcomings.

27. So-called "zero tolerance policies" and "tough-on-crime" approaches adopted in many States have led to a high increase in the number of arrests,[5] even for minor offences,[6] and to people being held in custody for long periods (see A/HRC/19/57/Add.2, para. 38). In addition, some practices, such as overly broad legislation and regulations (see CCPR/C/HND/CO/1, para. 13) and rewards to police for arrests (see CAT/OP/MEX/1, para. 182), have been reported to lead to arbitrary arrests. Such practices have significantly contributed to overincarceration and overcrowding.

28. The excessive use and length of pretrial detention have been identified as major causes of overcrowding.[7] While pretrial detention should be only a last resort

[3] See Roy Walmsley, "World prison population list", 10th ed. (London, International Centre for Prison Studies, 2013).

[4] See International Centre for Prison Studies, "Highest to lowest-occupancy level" (London, 2014).

[5] See Council of Europe document CPT/Inf (2014) 13, para. 37; www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/ACLU.pdf; www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/CNDH_Mexico.pdf; and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/PDDH_Nicaragua.pdf.

[6] See www.achpr.org/files/sessions/37th/mission-reports/prisons-2004/misrep_specmec_priso_southafrica_2004_eng.pdf, chap. F (i).

[7] See CAT/C/54/2, para. 77; and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/CNCPPDH_Algeria.pdf.

and subject to certain conditions,[8] in practice it is often applied to minor cases. Pretrial detainees reportedly constitute the majority of the prison population in many countries,[9] in some contexts more than 90 per cent of detainees (see A/HRC/25/71, para. 33). Pretrial detention should be only a measure of last resort.[10] The Human Rights Committee stated that "detention pending trial must be based on an individualized determination that it is reasonable and necessary taking into account all the circumstances, for such purposes as to prevent flight, interference with evidence or the recurrence of crime" (see CCPR/C/GC/35, para. 38). Pretrial detention should therefore not be mandatory and without regard to individual circumstances (see ibid.), and alternatives must be duly taken into account. The time limits imposed must be strictly observed.[11] Furthermore, should the length of pretrial detention reach the length of the longest sentence that could be imposed for the crimes with which the defendant is charged, he or she should be released (see CCPR/C/GC/35, para. 38; and CAT/OP/MLI/1, para. 30). Strict adherence to these international norms and standards will greatly assist in addressing overcrowding and overincarceration.

29. Efficiency in the proceedings following an arrest is crucial to reducing overcrowding and overincarceration. Prolonged pretrial detention is often the result of lost files, a shortage of judges or inadequate investigations. Owing to these deficiencies, the requirement to review the status of detainees at regular intervals is often not complied with (see CAT/OP/BEN/1, para. 160; and CAT/OP/HND/1, para. 184). Moreover, many States lack comprehensive and well-resourced legal aid programmes.

30. Some sentencing policies also contribute to overincarceration and the resulting overcrowding. The proven efficiency and effectiveness of non-custodial alternatives notwithstanding, there is the belief in most jurisdictions that prison is preferable to any alternative (see A/HRC/30/19, para. 38), and harsher penalties in the form of longer prison sentences continue to be imposed. Several international[12] and regional[13] bodies have identified the absence of alternatives to detention or shortcomings in their implementation as a significant contributor to overincarceration and overcrowding.

31. Several specific phenomena have increased the number of criminal convictions with custodial sentences. "Zero-tolerance policies", severe penalties for drug-related offences,[14] mandatory sentences for minor, non-violent offences,[15] excessively

[8] See CAT/C/54/2, para. 84, and Council of Europe document CPT/Inf (2014) 31, para. 56.

[9] See CAT/C/TGO/CO/2, para. 12, and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/OSJI.pdf.

[10] See articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. See also rules 6.1 and 6.2 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules); CCPR/C/GC/35, para. 38; and A/HRC/19/57, para. 48.

[11] See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/LICAMDH_Cameroon.pdf.

[12] See CAT/OP/BRA/1, para. 96; CCPR/C/AGO/CO/1, para. 19; A/HRC/25/60/Add.1, para. 84; and CAT/C/KHM/CO/2, para. 19.

[13] See Council of Europe document CPT/Inf (2014) 29, para. 33.

[14] See A/HRC/10/44, para. 55, and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/ACLU.pdf.

[15] See A/HRC/25/60/Add.1, para. 99, and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/PRI.pdf.

lengthy prison sentences, especially life sentences,[16] contrary to the principle of proportionality (see CAT/OP/MDV/1, para. 220), the failure to include time served on remand in sentence calculation (see ibid.) and great limitations to the remission of sentences (see A/HRC/25/60/Add.1, para. 84) have been identified as factors contributing to overincarceration. The lack of discretion for judges when sentencing, including minimum sentencing policies that prevent them from taking into consideration the individual circumstances of the detainee and the case, not only contribute to overincarceration but also are contrary to the principle of independence of the judiciary (see A/HRC/27/48, para. 73).

32. The adequate and independent oversight of places of detention plays an important role in preventing and addressing overincarceration and overcrowding. There are reports that authorities do not know the exact number of detainees held at any given time, or their status, as a result of improper record keeping in places of detention.[17] Many individuals remain in detention owing to the absence of centralized registers and the lack of an effective system to monitor the length of pretrial detention or the implementation of a custodial sentence.[18] Regular and frequent visits to places of detention by prosecutors and judges are also necessary, given that they allow judicial officials to have a proper understanding of the levels of overcrowding and the consequences of overincarceration and to take these factors into consideration when making decisions regarding detention, sentencing or release.

33. Another factor contributing to overincarceration is often the lack of an effective mechanism for persons deprived of their liberty to challenge the legality of their detention. It is essential that the right to challenge one's detention be effective, in particular when there are allegations that individuals may be detained unlawfully or when the pretrial detention limits are not respected or indeed prisoners are not promptly released after serving their sentence.[19] This requires that every detainee be able to take proceedings before an independent court, without substantial delay (see A/HRC/27/47, para. 16), to appear before the court in person and to have the right to legal assistance of his or her choice and access to legal aid.

III. Activities of the United Nations system

34. Promoting and protecting human rights in the administration of justice has been one of the focus areas of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at headquarters and in the field through its country presences, regional offices and human rights components of peace operations and political missions. During the reporting period, OHCHR continued to advocate constitutional and legislative reforms to ensure compliance by States with human

[16] See www.achpr.org/files/sessions/37th/mission-reports/prisons-2004/misrep_specmec_priso_southafrica_2004_eng.pdf, chap. F (i), and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/PRI.pdf.

[17] See A/HRC/22/53/Add.2, para. 46; and CAT/OP/BEN/1, para. 161.

[18] See *Montero-Aranguren v. Venezuela*, Inter-American Court of Human Rights judgment (2006), para. 60 (9); CAT/C/KHM/CO/2, para. 19.

[19] See CCPR/C/TUR/CO/1, para. 17, and www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Overincarceration/QUNO.pdf.

rights law relevant to the administration of justice, in more than 30 States. For example, OHCHR advised several States, including Grenada, Libya, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania, on the revision of their constitutions. In Kyrgyzstan, further to assistance provided by OHCHR, the parliament adopted seven laws integrating international human rights standards relating to the administration of justice. OHCHR also supported national efforts to adopt a human rights approach in the administration of justice. For example, in Tunisia, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), OHCHR supported national authorities in designing a national plan of action to reform the judicial and prison institutions. In Mexico, OHCHR supported local courts to develop fair trial and justice indicators.

35. OHCHR continued to provide advice in relation to protection from torture, in more than 25 countries. In Mauritania, following advice provided by OHCHR, laws criminalizing torture and establishing a national preventive mechanism were adopted. OHCHR also supported the strengthening of such mechanisms, for example in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. In other contexts, OHCHR provided advice on the use of force by law enforcement officers. For example, it provided analysis and advice for the drafting of a new law on the use of force by police in Peru. It also continued to provide legal and policy advice to 18 States with regard to issues relating to the death penalty.

36. In many countries, OHCHR supported the strengthening of the administration of justice by enhancing the human rights knowledge of members of the judiciary and law enforcement officers. In particular, it conducted or supported training in more than 45 countries. For example, the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau provided training to magistrates and investigators on a human rights-based approach, while such an approach was integrated into the training of judicial officials in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. OHCHR also regularly continues to train or contribute to training programmes for police officers or prison personnel in many countries, including in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Myanmar, Tunisia and Uganda. Regarding women's access to justice, OHCHR continued its work on judicial stereotyping, including through capacity-building for the judiciary in Guatemala, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania.

37. OHCHR issued a publication, *Human Rights and Traditional Justice Systems in Africa*, in July 2016. Traditional justice systems are widely used in large parts of Africa, but rarely receive the same focus of human rights attention given to the formal judiciary. The publication, developed as the result of the undertaking of extensive research and the holding of a number of expert meetings on the continent, covers the nature and characteristics of traditional justice systems, human rights issues associated with such justice systems and programmatic strategies for future work.

38. OHCHR, as Co-Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism, contributed to the development of a series of practical basic human rights reference guides. It is also implementing a project on training and capacity-building for law enforcement officials on human rights, the rule of law

and prevention of terrorism, which has included training conducted in Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia.

39. The Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-conflict and other Crisis Situations was established in 2012 as a platform for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP, OHCHR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other United Nations entities to jointly undertake responsibilities, including through co-location and integrated teams. Joint justice programmes have been or are being developed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Mali and the Sudan (Darfur).

40. UNODC promotes effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems by supporting Member States in developing and implementing the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice and other relevant international instruments. Its thematic programme on crime prevention and criminal justice reform supports more than 40 countries worldwide every year, focusing on topics such as the treatment of persons in custody, non-custodial sanctions and restorative justice, justice for children, crime prevention and violence against women, good governance, the independence of the judiciary, the integrity of criminal justice personnel and access to legal aid.

41. To support its technical assistance delivery, UNODC developed several handbooks and other tools, including a handbook on the status and role of prosecutors, a publication on criminal justice responses to violence against migrants, a handbook and training curriculum on women and imprisonment, a handbook on effective prosecution responses to violence against women and girls and training curricula on the treatment of child victims of and witnesses to crime, in addition to handbooks on the management of high-risk prisoners and on dynamic security and prison intelligence.

42. UNODC is stepping up global support and partnerships on priority issues that promote the respect and protection of human rights in the administration of justice. Under its new global programme on addressing global prison challenges, UNODC will support Member States in reducing the scope of imprisonment, strengthening prison management and improving prison conditions and supporting the social reintegration of offenders upon release. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office launched the Global Programme on Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Together with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, UNDP and the World Health Organization, UNODC is working towards a joint global programme on essential services for women and girls subject to violence, to provide coordinated responses by police, justice, health and social services.

43. With the political leverage of Security Council mandates, and the ability to deploy large numbers of specialized police, justice and corrections officers, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continued to strengthen justice and corrections systems in post-conflict environments across up to 15 peace operations during the reporting period. On the basis of the overall objectives of peacekeeping — to advance political solutions, improve security and lay the foundations for institution-

building — justice and corrections components typically engaged in seven priority areas: the basic functioning of the criminal justice system; the investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes and crimes that fuel conflict; the resolution of disputes over land and other resources; reductions in the level of prolonged and arbitrary detention; the professionalization of justice and corrections personnel; the development and implementation of national justice and corrections reform strategies; and the strengthening of the legislative and regulatory framework. Furthermore, taking into account the political implications of such efforts, and of international human rights norms and standards, the Department sought to reinforce the national ownership of reform in the justice sector.

44. Peacekeeping missions, for example, used their convening authority to coordinate criminal justice frameworks in Mali and helped to reopen courts and prisons in "islands of stability" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The mission in Afghanistan established dialogue on land conflict issues, while police components supported national police institutions to maintain law and order and instilled respect for human rights, gender and juvenile justice concerns through training at police academies.

45. UNDP provides rule of law and human rights assistance in more than 100 countries and promotes accessible, effective and accountable justice systems to contribute to good governance, peace and stability. Specifically in crisis-affected contexts and through the Global Focal Point, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, OHCHR, UN-Women and UNODC, UNDP works to ensure the meaningful participation of the most excluded in the justice sector, including by increasing the number of female police officers in Afghanistan and Liberia and supporting community-oriented policing in Pakistan and South Sudan. Similarly, UNDP is consistently engaging in increasing access to justice and the right to timely and fair trial through the use of mobile courts in Somalia and the provision of tailored legal aid for pretrial detainees in Burundi and for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq.

46. UN-Women supports efforts to review discriminatory laws and to provide gender-sensitive justice services to ensure compliance with international obligations regarding women's rights. In Brazil, it supported the adoption of a law criminalizing femicide; in Indonesia, it provided training to High Court judges on human rights and gender equality. UN-Women also supports gender-responsive constitution-making and maintains a public database of gender equality-related provisions contained in 195 constitutions across all regions, which is used in these efforts.

47. In 2015, UN-Women launched a guidebook on general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security. It provides information on the content of the general recommendation and those resolutions and includes a checklist of questions for States parties reporting to the Committee, with questions on women's access to justice.

48. UN-Women is a partner in the Global Focal Point arrangement, working alongside partners in crises contexts to provide support to the United Nations country teams, peacekeeping missions, State authorities and civil society to ensure

comprehensive gender mainstreaming in justice and security sector reforms. This work has included joint planning and assessment missions and joint programming in the Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia and the State of Palestine.

49. UNICEF supports Governments and civil society in some 155 countries to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards. Its work to support human rights in the administration of justice includes supporting child rights legislative reform, universal access to birth registration and justice for children. UNICEF also provides technical assistance to Governments to support the inclusion of child rights provisions in constitutions, the development of children's codes and the review of relevant national laws to bring them into line with international standards.

50. In the period from 2012 to 2015, UNICEF strengthened justice systems for children in at least 116 countries, for both children in conflict with the law and children who were victims of and witnesses to crime. Areas of work include increasing children's access to justice, child-sensitive procedures and interviewing, child-friendly police stations and courts with specialized personnel, the promotion of diversion away from judicial proceedings and alternative measures to detention during the entire criminal justice process, and the monitoring of detention conditions for children deprived of their liberty. UNICEF has also worked in partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on child rights training for peacekeeping forces in predeployment, and with UNODC on programming relating to anti-trafficking and justice for children in countries as diverse as Colombia, Liberia and Viet Nam.

51. Working with the judiciary and the police, and increasingly with the welfare/social sector as part of preventive and rehabilitative efforts, UNICEF invests in capacity-building for national governmental and non-governmental partners by working on training curricula, coordination and data collection.

IV. Developments at the national level

52. A note verbale was sent to States requesting contributions to the present report. The present section is based on summaries of information provided by 17 States.

53. Albania reported that, in an effort to address complaints by prisoners, postboxes had been installed in prisons, offering a confidential way of posting letters of complaint regarding inhumane treatment and abuse by prison staff. Furthermore, prison staff had received human rights training, including on the prevention of torture. The construction and remodelling of detention facilities had been carried out and planned in accordance with international norms and standards.

54. As of 2015, the General Regulations of Prisons in Albania included the preferential treatment of juveniles based on their best interest, with individualized plans of rehabilitation and reintegration. Moreover, detained minors subject to physical, psychological or sexual violence, before or during their stay in an institution, are provided with immediate protective measures, support and legal counselling. In 2015, a study was undertaken to better facilitate the reintegration of juveniles into society and reduce repeat offending.

55. In Bahrain, an amendment of 2012 to the Judicial Authority Act established an independent budget for the Supreme Judicial Council, giving the judiciary complete independence from all other government departments. Since 2012, an annual training programme has trained judges and prosecutors on international human rights standards and criminal justice and the rule of law.

56. Bahrain further reported several amendments to the Criminal Code, in accordance with human rights. The Code of Criminal Procedure has also been amended to, among other things, provide for the protection of witnesses, experts and victims during and after trials and reduce the provisional detention period that lower courts may impose from 45 to 30 days. New laws adopted in 2014 and 2015 provide that every correctional and rehabilitation institute should have a medical clinic providing comprehensive free health care for inmates, together with a social worker specialized in psychology and sociology.

57. To promote justice for juveniles, a new bill is due to increase the legal minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 18 years. National law enforcement agencies have developed a comprehensive plan to train officers on human rights and the rule of law. The Ministry of the Interior has approved a code of conduct for law enforcement officials that is based on the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. Furthermore, the police academy curriculum discusses concepts of human rights in law enforcement. A special investigation unit has been established to investigate allegations of torture and abuse. An ombudsman's office established at the Ministry of the Interior has received, investigated and addressed complaints of misconduct by Ministry employees. Also since 2012, the Office of the Inspector General of the National Security Agency receives and reviews complaints within the Agency.

58. Ecuador provided information on ways in which the Constitutional Court has improved access to justice, in particular through efforts to decentralize its work through regional offices and the use of videoconferencing technology and dissemination workshops. This has allowed several thousand individuals to gain access to constitutional jurisdictions without having to travel to the capital. The Criminal Code now includes violence against women and domestic violence as crimes. In 2015, a directive was issued, specifying that the Public Defender Service was to ensure free and continuing assistance in places of detention to persons deprived of their liberty, their families and third parties visiting the place of detention.

59. El Salvador has adopted reforms to the Criminal Code to allow for aggravating circumstances to be considered when crimes of threat and murder are committed for reasons of hatred for sexual orientation, identity and gender expression of the victim. The first specialized court addressing violence and discrimination against women has been created in the capital. El Salvador also reported developments facilitating access to justice, such as modifying the Code of Criminal Procedure to allow remote hearings through videoconferencing technology as well as the implementation of so-called Gesell chambers, to exclude contacts between minor victims of crimes and the accused.

60. Italy reported the passage of a law amending the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Penitentiary Act, providing that, among other things, precautionary

measures such as pretrial detention are permissible only when the risk of absconding or of crime recurrence is "current and concrete"; an order for pretrial detention must be accompanied by justification for the inadequacy of house arrest and electronic tags; and the right of inmates to receive visitors has been extended to allow visitation with their child with a serious disability. Italy further reported the recent establishment of a national ombudsman on the rights of persons detained or deprived of personal liberty, a protection and monitoring mechanism. Functions of the body include monitoring, visitation of facilities, oversight, auditing and reporting.

61. In Jamaica, a justice reform implementation unit was created in 2012. It coordinates and supports reform initiatives that aim to ensure speedy and fair trials. A restorative justice programme was introduced as an alternative to traditional adjudication and to reduce backlog by diverting cases from the formal justice system and resolving conflicts at the community level. Moreover, non-custodial sentences, probation and community service are increasingly being used to stem overcrowding in prison and detention facilities. The Government is also actively pursuing the establishment of a national human rights institution.

62. Human rights training is provided for all new recruits to the Jamaica Constabulary Force, and a new diversity policy guides police conduct in dealing with particular groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. Furthermore, a new administrative policy of the Force addresses issues relating to vulnerable groups. In addition, in an effort to reduce the use of lethal weapons by law enforcement, kits of less lethal weapons and restraints have been acquired.

63. Kazakhstan reported that the Supreme Court had put significant efforts into modernizing the justice system and developing effective administration of justice, with the goal of simplifying access to justice, forming a new judiciary, ensuring effective legal proceedings and increasing the degree of confidence in the justice system.

64. On 1 January 2015, a new criminal code, code of criminal procedure and penitentiary code entered into force, ensuring better compliance by the judicial system of Kazakhstan with the international instruments on human rights. For example, criminal liability has been increased for acts of torture that result in grave harm to the health, or the death, of the victim; life imprisonment is not imposed on persons who have committed crimes at an age younger than 18 years, nor on women, nor on men older than 63 years. Rules on parole have also been modified: the group of people eligible for parole has been widened and milder conditions for vulnerable groups are provided for.

65. An institute of investigative judges was introduced in 2015, with the aim of ensuring the prevention of unfounded restrictions of constitutional rights and freedoms. The jurisdiction of investigative judges has been extended to the authorization of seizure, search, body search and inspection. Moreover, this reform entails the wider application of preventive measures such as bail, house arrest, restricted residence, supervision of a convicted minor and personal guarantee. On 18 February 2016, an academy of justice was established, aimed at training judiciary officials and improving their educational and professional skills, including on issues relating to gender and the protection of children.

66. Mexico provided details about the work of the Council of the Federal Judiciary to reinforce the protection of human rights. For example, the Council published a series of "protocols", or reference tools, to support and guide judges in the application of international human rights standards: judging with a gender perspective; matters involving the rights of indigenous persons, communities and peoples; matters affecting migrants and asylum seekers; cases affecting girls, boys and teenagers; matters involving the rights of persons with disabilities; cases involving sexual orientation or gender identity; and matters involving acts constituting torture and ill-treatment. The Council also organized workshops on judging with a gender perspective and published a notebook on the best practices in this area. Mexico reported on the work of the Supreme Court to promote and disseminate human rights, through, among other things, the creation of an advanced search engine on human rights, referring to national, regional and international practice.

67. Mexico also reported the gradual implementation of a new criminal justice system, which enshrines the principles of presumption of innocence and equality of the parties and seeks to ensure due process, access to justice and protection of victims. It also accords priority to reparations and a new rationale for the implementation of sanctions. In this context, the National Code of Criminal Procedure was published in March 2014.

68. Paraguay provided information on the role of public defenders in the protection of persons deprived of their liberty. The Public Defender Service issued resolutions with the goal of increasing the use by public defenders of international human rights law instruments. Public defenders have the power and responsibility to conduct prison visits in order to obtain information on the legal situation of persons deprived of their liberty and on their conditions and treatment in detention, and initiate complaint proceedings on their behalf. In the area of juvenile justice, a manual on criminal procedures applies a form of criminal procedure for juveniles that is different to that applicable to adults, in conformity with international instruments. The Service also worked on issues linked to access to justice for women, indigenous peoples and older persons through the formulation of policies and training and workshops.

69. In the Republic of Moldova, Act No. 138, adopted in 2015, provides for the appointment in each probation office of a probation counsellor specialized in juvenile probation. A recently adopted law, amending and supplementing previous acts, allows for fewer arrests of juveniles in situations in which re-education is possible. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice created an independent internal disciplinary mechanism to address detainee complaints of torture and other ill-treatment. To improve surveillance and increase the accountability of prison personnel, cameras were installed in penitentiaries.

70. Qatar reported amending its law by adding a clear definition of torture in line with the definition contained in the Convention against Torture. Law enforcement officials receive training on the legal framework guiding their work, including on the prevention of torture. New judicial officers, including lawyers and prosecutors, attend training in human rights in the course of their mandatory legal training.

71. In Romania, the new Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure provide for alternative measures to imprisonment, including the increased usage of fines and house arrest, with the aim of preventing the overcrowding of prisons. As of 2014, pregnant women and women with a child up to 1 year of age in their care are exempt from the maximum security regime, and detained mothers have the possibility of taking care of their child up to the age of 1 year. The same law provides for women and young offenders to have access to education and psychological and social assistance, as needed. A law adopted in 2015 provides for special conditions for detained minors, including education centres.

72. The Romanian National Institute of Magistracy, in collaboration with the National Council for Combating Discrimination, conducts continuing training and seminars on the right to equality and non-discrimination, which are aimed at helping judges and prosecutors to combat discrimination. The Institute provides another continuing training project on equal access to justice for Roma.

73. The Russian Federation reported the adoption in 2013 and amendment in 2016, by the plenary of the Supreme Court, of Regulation No. 41, relating to the practical modalities of the implementation of the law on security measures, detention, house arrest and bail. It provides details for the implementation of the right to liberty and security that are guaranteed by the Constitution. In 2016, the Supreme Court prepared a synthesis of the practice and legal interpretation of the European Court for Human Rights in relation to article 5, paragraph 3, of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in order to improve the interpretation of Russian legislation regarding the right of the accused to a trial within a reasonable time and the right to appeal against decisions relating to security measures. Recent developments in international law related to the administration of justice were made available to judges of the Supreme Court and other jurisdictions through a database containing a section on international law, which includes the Nelson Mandela Rules, the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and several United Nations documents pertaining to juvenile justice.

74. Saudi Arabia provided information on legal provisions protecting the right to fair trial. Specific provisions for the protection of children in the administration of justice were highlighted. Several measures have been developed to support the growth of a child in a healthy and safe environment, such as support for training relevant personnel in child abuse cases, such as judges, police officers, doctors and specialists. Programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of children previously involved in activities relating to terrorism have been instituted. A special status in the administration of justice is accorded to women, such as the right to choose the jurisdiction in which to pursue claims and providing women with various forms of judicial support.

75. Slovenia reported on plans to implement Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament, which establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. Slovenia also reported on measures in place to protect juveniles, including the use of safe rooms and audio/videoconferencing to conduct interviews.

76. In 2015, the Spanish Code of Criminal Procedure was the subject of a comprehensive reform with the aim of strengthening the procedural safeguards of detainees. The revised Code states explicitly that the rights of the defence apply from the moment when a person is notified of being suspected of a punishable act, is detained or is the object of other security measures and apply until the completion of a sentence. The revised Code also provides guarantees in relation to persons deprived of their liberty, providing in particular that arrests and detentions are to be carried out in the manner least harmful to the individual, and establishes limits on the length of preventive detention. It also provides a framework for incommunicado detention, limited to exceptional cases in which there is an urgent need to protect life, liberty or physical integrity or upon the request of the investigative judge so as to avoid severely jeopardizing the investigation. This measure can be imposed only by the decision of a judge, for a maximum duration of five days, is subject to two daily medical examinations and cannot be imposed on detainees under 16 years of age.

77. The revised Code of Criminal Procedure provides specific safeguards to reinforce the protection of the rights of juveniles in the justice system. It specifies that, if the detainee is a minor, the juvenile units of the prosecution and the guardians of the detainee are to be informed of the reason for and the place of detention.

78. In the Sudan, the Ministry of Justice issued Decree No. 47/2015 to create a committee to review laws, including the Criminal Act (1991). By Presidential Decree No. 489/2014, a centre for judicial and legal studies was created to train judicial and law enforcement personnel. In the two years since its creation, training has covered such topics as criminal justice, juvenile justice and governance.

79. The Sudan also reported that a coordinating council for human rights had been established for the purposes of human rights education for law enforcement personnel. It has organized workshops, in cooperation with UNDP, to train judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police on international human rights standards for the right to a fair trial.

V. Conclusions

80. The developments, challenges and good practices highlighted in the present report indicate the essential role of international human rights norms and standards in ensuring a fair and transparent system of the administration of justice. States should pay particular attention to access to justice, including for women, children and migrants, the rights of persons deprived of their liberty and legal aid. To give the related norms and standards full effect, States must, when applying them, take into account the interpretation and conclusions of human rights treaty bodies and special procedures. These bodies also play an important role in the effective oversight of the implementation of relevant human rights law instruments.

81. The excessive recourse to incarceration and the resulting overcrowding of places of detention remain a main, and concerning, human rights challenge in the administration of justice. This challenge must be addressed and urgent and

sustained efforts deployed to strengthen the implementation of the relevant human rights norms and standards, and criminal justice policies that contribute to these phenomena must be reviewed accordingly. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the right of detainees to challenge detention is fully respected, using pretrial detention only as a last resort, developing and implementing, including by legislative measures, alternatives to custodial measures, during pretrial and post-conviction and reviewing criminal policies and legislation to ensure proportionate sentencing.

82. **During the reporting period, United Nations entities continued to assist States in the development of norms and standards regarding human rights in the administration of justice, as well as in their implementation at the national level, in particular through the provision of technical assistance and advocacy.**

83. **As highlighted in States' submissions, in addition to training and other capacity-building measures, the continuous review of compliance of legislation with the obligations of States under international human rights law is an indispensable requirement for a human rights-compliant system of administration of justice.**

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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 10 August 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and has the honour to remind of the decision of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to present its candidature for election as a member of the Human Rights Council, on one of the seats allocated for the African States, for the term 2017-2019, at the elections taking place during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, in 2016 in New York.

Egypt's candidature to the Human Rights Council is endorsed by the African States (see African Union decision No. EX.CL/Dec.917(XXVIII)Rev.2) and by the Arab Group (see Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council decision No. 8025 of 11 March 2016).

Furthermore, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, enclosed herewith is a copy of the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of Egypt for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Egypt should be grateful if the present note verbale and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 114 (d).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 10 August 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Egypt to the Human Rights Council, 2017-2019

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

I. Framework of action

1. With a belief in the importance of the visions and hopes of the people in shaping their future and the role of international cooperation in empowering States to fulfil the aspirations of their people in peace, security, development and human rights, Egypt would like to present its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period from 2017 to 2019.

2. Egypt is a founding member of and an active player in the United Nations and other regional and international organizations. Egypt is a State party to almost all main international human rights instruments[a] and has an important continuous

[a] The following is a list of the international human rights instruments ratified by Egypt:
- The Slavery Convention, 1926
- The Protocol amending the Slavery Convention, 1926
- International Labour Organization Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1930
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949
- The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- The Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953
- The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956
- International Labour Organization Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- The 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1980
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984
- The International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, 1985
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990
- The outcome of the First Arab High-level Conference on Children, 1992
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000.

contribution in the formulation of the international human rights instruments and the global human rights agenda, including the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the formulation of its working mechanisms. It has never spared an opportunity to build bridges between different groups and cooperate with various stakeholders to promote and support the role of the Council and further the goals of the United Nations in the field of human rights, being one of the three pillars of the Organization.

3. Egypt's candidature comes at a special moment in the lives of millions of people in Africa, the Middle East and the developing world at large, whose lives are deeply affected by the current global challenges, including the current influxes of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, neglect of the needs of the developing countries in this regard, including their collective right to development, the evolving trends of discrimination and racism, the threats of extremism and terrorism and the continuing situations of foreign occupation. Hence, it is with great honour that Egypt received the endorsement of the African Union during the summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2016 as one of the 13 representatives of the continent in the membership of the Council during the period 2017-2019.

4. If elected to the Human Rights Council, Egypt will work constructively with all parties, on the basis of dialogue and cooperation towards better understanding and action, to remove obstacles to the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Egypt will also focus on the assistance needed for States to fulfil their human rights obligations, will confront human rights violations whenever and wherever they occur, will remain supportive of key thematic initiatives within the Council, including issues of special importance to countries in its regional and cultural spheres, and will continue to work on addressing emerging challenges while ensuring the full respect of international human rights law and addressing the root causes of such challenges. It will strive to ensure that due focus is given to a host of issues, including economic, social and cultural rights, gender equity, the empowerment of women and the enjoyment of human rights by children, youth, older persons, migrants and persons with disabilities.

II. Egypt undertakes the following commitments

5. At the international and the regional levels, the Government of Egypt will:

(a) Pursue its efforts as an advocate of a strong and effective United Nations, including the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, especially in the first year after the tenth anniversary of its inception, the human rights treaty bodies and other human rights-related mechanisms. It will be guided in this process by a firm conviction in the principles of universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness, interdependence and mutual enforceability of human rights and the need to work through constructive dialogue and international cooperation with all relevant parties to ensure the full realization of the goals for which the Council was created;

(b) Support the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in fulfilling his mandate, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 48/141, and towards that goal engaging positively and constructively with him and his Office;

(c) Promote the constructive role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society at large in the promotion of human rights at all levels, in accordance with national laws and regulations;

(d) Lead efforts and engage in partnerships to ensure that the Human Rights Council continues to function effectively and efficiently and is capable of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction between rights or among people. Egypt has played a key role in the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, starting from the formulation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, until today. For instance, it was the party that demanded the universal nature of the Declaration and, more recently, its expertise contributed to the development of the standard-setting mandate of the Human Rights Council, based on a firm belief in the indivisibility of all human rights, the prospect of hope associated with the Human Rights Council since its inception and a strong belief in the importance of its role. Over the past decade, the initiatives Egypt led and supported in the Human Rights Council were a reflection of this firm belief. For instance, Egypt introduced, during the thirty-first regular session, the resolutions on the right to work and the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights in an attempt to focus on key challenges affecting two fundamental human rights around the globe. It addressed in another resolution, on behalf of the African Group, the challenges posed by the negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation in order to address the impact of the issue on human rights. A similar approach was adopted in the resolutions on the protection of the family, the third of which was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its thirty-second regular session, in July 2016, and on the protection of journalists during armed conflicts. Egypt continues to co-lead a number of important initiatives, such as those on local government and human rights, youth and human rights, and access to medicines in the context of the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health. Equally, Egypt has engaged regularly with different groups to enable the Council to reach an agreement in situations in which such a result did not seem achievable, including, for instance, Human Rights Council resolution 12/16 on freedom of opinion and expression, which Egypt jointly developed and introduced to the Council, and its role in the formulation of resolution 23/2, on the role of freedom of opinion and expression in women's empowerment, and resolution 16/18, on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief;

(e) Promote constructive dialogue and cooperation, including through sharing good practices, technical cooperation and capacity-building, in addressing the challenges facing Member States, in a manner that respects the mandate of the Council and the importance of avoiding the shortcomings that led to the failure of the Human Rights Commission. It has regularly stood against the selective targeting of States on the basis of political considerations or motives. On the other hand, it has also not shied away from engaging in situations of special concern and where there is a need to encourage an adequate international response while taking into account the different respective mandates of United Nations bodies, in addition to the contribution that regional organizations and mechanisms can provide in this respect;

(f) Continue cooperation with Member States concerning the strengthening of the United Nations treaty body system, and provide adequate support for United Nations agencies, programmes and funds that contribute to the promotion of human rights;

(g) Work with relevant stakeholders to address the financial and institutional challenges facing the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), treaty bodies, and the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms within the context of their respective mandates; in this context, the Egyptian Government has decided to support the work of the High Commissioner by providing a financial contribution of $30,000 for the period 2017-2019 for the first time, notwithstanding the economic situation;

(h) Ensure that due attention is given to issues of particular importance in the context of globalization and several emerging challenges affecting the lives of millions around the globe, including the threats posed by terrorist groups and similar organizations, the recurrence of many manifestations of discrimination in regular and new forms, including racism and xenophobia, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and challenges facing the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, as well as the role of key actors and institutions in society in the protection and promotion of human rights;

(i) Continue to support initiatives and processes, at the international, regional and local levels, to advance the empowerment of women and equality between men and women and provide adequate protections for the rights of the child and persons in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, youth and the impoverished segments of societies. Egypt's role as a pioneer of such causes at the regional and international levels is strongly supported by domestic developments in these areas. Women represent over 15 per cent of the membership of the Egyptian Parliament for the first time in its history. Laws have recently been issued to invigorate penalties, and prevention mechanisms relevant to cases of violence against women have been established. The Constitution enforces the full equality of women with men and prohibits any form of discrimination against them. It further provides protection against all forms of violence against women and special care and attention in cases of motherhood, childhood, female heads of families, women as part of the elderly population and women with disabilities. Such developments reflect the wide participation of women in all aspects of life, including the formulation of the Constitution itself. It is worth noting that similar protection and examples of empowerment are not exclusive to women and their rights, but extend to children, persons with disabilities, elderly people, youth and the poor. This national commitment is fully reflected in Egypt's interactions in different international forums, including the Human Rights Council;

(j) Contribute to the enhancement of the system of international protection for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and strengthen the relevant norms and standards under the applicable international law. In this context, the Egyptian Government has embarked on a process of developing a national strategy for combating trafficking in persons and another national strategy aimed at combating illegal migration;

(k) Build cross-regional partnerships to support the economic, social and cultural rights of all, including through addressing the particular needs and challenges of developing countries in this context, including with respect to the right to work, the right to development, the right to an adequate standard of living and the protection of cultural heritage as a fundamental component of access to the right to participate in cultural life;

(l) Promote the efforts of Member States to strengthen their national mechanisms aimed at ensuring accountability and remedy, in line with their respective obligations under international human rights law, including in relation to violations and abuses committed by non-State actors;

(m) Promote South-South cooperation, both as part of the decision-making process in the United Nations in general and at the Council in particular;

(n) Lead the development of enhanced regional cooperation in the area of protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including through the Human Rights Council, especially by using the virtue of being a founder of and an active player in a number of key regional and political organizations, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation;

(o) Encourage more cooperation and political dialogue in the field of human rights within the African continent in order to enhance human rights and fundamental freedoms in the continent through the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Peer Review Mechanism; and continue to engage in the consideration of the protocols to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, relating to the rights of women and to the African Court of Justice and Human Rights. In general, Egypt remains committed to the enhancement of the African human rights structure and to the strengthening of the role of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and to building on its achievements, particularly its rich jurisprudence, including through providing training programmes for experts from the African continent and developing countries.

6. At the national level, the Government of Egypt will:

(a) Continue to strengthen the national human rights framework and the foundations for a modern and democratic society. Egypt is committed to upholding the rights of its citizens in line with its respective international legal obligations and to continue to develop and strengthen its national human rights institutions and national human rights frameworks as the backbone of the protection of rights and freedoms of its citizens, as enshrined in the Constitution. It adopted a new Constitution in 2014 that reflects all such obligations and others, and ensures that international obligations are part of national laws. It has also held, over the past two years, presidential and parliamentary elections, which reflected the level of freedom and new guarantees of rights and freedoms and had the widespread participation of local and international representatives and civil society organizations. The Egyptian Parliament (the House of Representatives) started its sessions at the beginning of 2016 and, with its legislative authority, started to exercise its constitutional mandate to conduct oversight of the actions of the Government. The Government also made this commitment a national priority on the basis of an agenda of comprehensive

reform and institutional development aimed at meeting the aspirations of 90 million Egyptians who made their voices heard clearly in two consecutive revolutions and through their wide support of a national road map for the future;

(b) Engage in a process of review of national laws to ensure their conformity with the Constitution and the full protection of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Egyptian Constitution of 2014 has expanded the level and scope of protection of rights and freedoms, and introduced protections for rights never covered by similar documents in Egypt, ensuring that respect for and the protection of rights and freedoms is a part of the national political system. More specifically, it has extended protection for rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants, introduces protection for rights and freedoms never codified in Egyptian Constitutions or legislations, such as freedoms of belief, thought and opinion, the rights to peacefully assemble and to strike, the right to dignity for all citizens and the rights to freedom of scientific research and artistic and literary creativity, and expands protections for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities and ensures their full inclusion in society. It also establishes equality among all citizens and ensures their enjoyment of rights and freedoms without discrimination on any grounds, including through the establishment of an anti-discrimination commission. One of the first tasks of the new Parliament was to review different laws and legislation issued during the transitional period. It is also entrusted with the mission to ensure that existing and new Egyptian laws and legislation fully conform to the Constitution. In line with its constitutional capacity to propose legislation, the Government is currently elaborating a number of draft laws to assist the Parliament in such an important task, including a draft law regulating the building and renovation of places of worship, such as churches. It has engaged civil society and society at large in various phases of the legislative process, including a significant number of draft laws dealing with various human rights issues. Finally, the judiciary plays a key role in scrutinizing the result of this process, especially through the work of the Supreme Constitutional Court;

(c) Work on strengthening national human rights institutions and developing their role within the international human rights framework, and review in this context the laws governing the mandate of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, accredited with "A" status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, in addition to laws governing the mandates of the national councils for women, children and persons with disabilities;

(d) Remain committed to further strengthening national redress mechanisms available to all citizens, with a view to enabling them to report complaints to be examined and investigated by relevant authorities and for the perpetrators to be held accountable;

(e) Continue to promote a human rights culture and human rights education and training at the national level. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that a number of Egyptian universities are currently providing courses on an introduction to human rights. In addition, capacity-building programmes have been provided to law enforcement bodies to ensure conformity with international standards;

(f) Promote the constructive role of legally registered NGOs and civil society at large in the promotion of human rights at all levels and develop the necessary partnership with civil society organizations in order to ensure that their voices are represented in the international human rights system as partners in the promotion and advancement of the rights of all populations. Egypt highly recognizes the pivotal role played by civil society and NGOs in support of the efforts of the State in the several social, economic and political spheres. At the national level, this fact has been reflected in the regular consultations between the Government and civil society organizations. The new Constitution clearly states in article 75 that all citizens shall have the right to form associations and similar institutions on a democratic basis, which shall acquire legal status upon notification. Accordingly, the Government has embarked on a multi-step process of reviewing and amending Law No. 84 of 2002 on NGOs and institutions in Egypt. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has held many meetings and workshops with representatives of Egyptian civil society to discuss and put forward proposals for amending the law. It is worth noting that 770,000,000 Egyptian pounds, representing 90 per cent of the requests for funding from foreign sources, have been approved. Consequently, it is no surprise that the number of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity has risen to around 47,000, from 26,000 in 2010. Non-Egyptian NGOs are also welcome to work in Egypt, as long as they undergo the normative and procedural framework set by the Egyptian Government, which is in line with Egypt's international obligations. There are currently 93 registered foreign NGOs working freely in Egypt. The competent authorities review the registration requests submitted by the NGOs and entities through a national committee composed of representatives of the authorities concerned with the civil work in Egypt;

(g) Remain committed to the commitments undertaken in the framework of the universal periodic review mechanism. Egypt has accepted over 80 per cent of the recommendations presented to it during its review session in November 2014. A permanent national committee for human rights was established to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations. The committee has issued a number of decisions to that effect, frequently engages with civil society organizations and will be leading national efforts for the preparation of Egypt's upcoming review under the third universal periodic review cycle;

(h) Engage with OHCHR in order to expand the current level of cooperation and identify areas where technical assistance can have a specific impact according to national priorities. Egypt is currently engaging with OHCHR in order to start implementation of a technical cooperation programme, which focuses on capacity-building in domains of special importance to the national efforts in protecting and promoting human rights;

(i) Remain committed to submitting its periodic national reports to treaty bodies of the treaties to which Egypt is party and to review reservations on and the status of ratification of the different regional and international agreements. Egypt has engaged in a revision of its position with respect to the different international and regional instruments relating to human rights. One of the latest outcomes of this process was the withdrawal of Egypt's reservation on article 21 (2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, concerning the minimum age of marriage for both sexes. In addition, the national committee for human rights is

currently reviewing the number of periodic national reports that have not yet been duly submitted in order to begin their preparation;

(j) Increase engagement and cooperation with the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, including by intensifying the frequency of visits of special procedures to Egypt. A number of Special Rapporteurs have visited Egypt since 2009, including the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The Government has been considering additional visit requests by special procedures with the aim of accepting them. Recently, Egypt extended invitations to four mandate holders, and is in the process of finalizing the necessary relevant arrangements.

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Culture of peace

Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities that have been carried out by the main United Nations entities working in the areas of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace since the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolutions 70/19 and 70/20.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 70/19 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and 70/20 on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

2. During the reporting period, from June 2015 to June 2016, an array of United Nations entities worked actively, often in close cooperation with one another, to design and implement policies, programmes, projects and initiatives in the areas of work covered by the two resolutions. The resolutions have special resonance for the ongoing International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), an ambitious multilateral initiative led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which followed on from the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). The resolutions also relate closely to and derive renewed impetus from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, most notably its call to build "peaceful, just and inclusive societies" and the objectives contained in Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (see General Assembly resolution 70/1). As stated in the Agenda, "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development".

3. The promotion of a culture of peace, intercultural and interreligious dialogue is also at the heart of the Organization's renewed focus on conflict prevention and mediation. In order to counter the messages of religious, cultural and social intolerance that are being spread with such devastating consequences by violent extremist groups, in January 2016, the Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (see A/70/764 and A/70/675). The initiative was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/254. The Secretary-General called for an "All-of-United Nations" approach, both at Headquarters and in the field, to support all efforts to combat violent extremism.

4. Underscoring the strong commitment of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and affiliated non-governmental organizations to the United Nations system's promotion of intercultural dialogue, in a recent consultation on the programme and budget of UNESCO for 2018-2021, 97 per cent of respondents expressed the view that this area of work should have a high or medium priority for the entity in implementing the 2030 Agenda, ranking it second only to education in importance.

5. The present report was prepared primarily by UNESCO, in close collaboration with the Secretariat and a broad range of United Nations system entities, reflecting the shared responsibility involved in promoting a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. As well as pursuing and refining ongoing initiatives, the participating entities have explored innovative ways to work more effectively together and in partnership with national governments and other stakeholders.

6. The information is presented thematically according to the major areas of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which was adopted by the 194th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO and welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/140. Rather than provide an

exhaustive list of the initiatives relating to resolutions 70/19 and 70/20, the report gives an overview and highlights some examples of best practice that could be replicated in other settings and that reflect recent trends.

II. Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic and linguistic and religious diversity

7. Conflicts may have a cultural dimension, as do the phenomena of violent extremism and rising xenophobia that are further undermining peace and security in so many parts of the world. In addition to the effects of globalization in its various forms, the continued movement of refugees and migrants increase the points of interaction and friction among groups that can give rise to identity-related tensions. This is particularly the case in societies whose citizens have previously had little or no experience of living in close proximity to people from other cultural backgrounds.

8. Nevertheless, culture can be very effectively harnessed to unite different groups. The global outcry over the destruction of World Heritage sites in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in recent times bears witness to the unique status that cultural and natural heritage have in being both specific to a culture, reflecting the life of a community, its history and identity, and also belonging to all of humanity. Protecting and restoring cultural heritage rekindles hope and offers fragile, conflict- and poverty-ravaged communities a constructive alternative to the violent extremist's nihilistic agenda. In Mali, which has endured repeated violence since 2012, UNESCO has enhanced the national peace and reconciliation process that followed the signature of a peace agreement in 2015 by helping to rebuild 14 historic mausoleums in the World Heritage city of Timbuktu. The centuries-old mausoleums, sacred places for the local population, were destroyed by radical Islamists in deliberate acts that the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has described as "cultural cleansing". The city formally received the keys to the mausoleums, which were rebuilt by local stonemasons, at the Djingareyber Mosque in February 2016, in a traditional consecration ceremony that last took place at the site in the eleventh century. The strong involvement of local communities and religious leaders in the reconstruction project demonstrates the power of culture to unite and restore the confidence of a fragmented community. International cooperation to salvage the archaeological heritage of the Syrian Arab Republic is also in place. A rapid assessment mission was sent to the country in April 2016, an initiative that was followed by an international conference, held in Berlin in June 2016, in partnership with the Government of Germany. Some 230 international and Syrian experts discussed priority measures and how and when work on the ground should begin. The Unite for Heritage online media campaign continues to keep the activities in the public eye. Other actions to put culture and heritage at the centre of peacebuilding and humanitarian emergency operations, most notably the signature of a recent agreement between UNESCO and the International Committee of the Red Cross to integrate culture into humanitarian operations, pave the way for further opportunities to cooperate and build peace through culture.

Religious leaders combat hate speech, promote respect for religious diversity

Those with influence in a community can play a significant role in promoting mutual understanding. In response to an alarming spike in online and offline hate speech in recent years, the Office of the Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect has been working with religious leaders worldwide to develop a pioneering plan of action for the prevention of incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. An initial meeting of faith leaders, known as the "Forum on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes", held in Fez, Morocco, in April 2015, led to a declaration and a plan of action that calls on faith leaders to engage in dialogue with those who express radical views, to counter hate speech through unequivocal messages and to support interfaith dialogue, respect for religious and cultural diversity and human rights (see also para. 46). Subsequent regional meetings in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa have produced regional strategies. A fifth meeting in the Asia-Pacific region was to be held at the end of September 2016. A review of the declaration and plan of action are currently ongoing, ahead of a global meeting of religious leaders to be held before the end of 2016. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are working together on the implementation of the Fez Declaration and Plan of Action and related regional strategies for more effective action on the ground.

9. History and memory are also vectors for promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge between cultures. Several UNESCO projects, including its "General History" series, its Silk Road and Slave Route projects tackle prejudice by retelling the history of the world's cultures in a way that is free from cultural and other forms of bias. In the reporting period, the "Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*", in phase II of the programme, saw the development of curriculum outlines and pedagogical content for African primary and secondary schools, while a meeting of the Scientific Committee was held in Luanda, in February 2016, to receive and consider contributions to the upcoming Volume IX of the *General History of Africa*.

10. The *General History of Africa* and Slave Route projects are of special relevance in the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), a major initiative being led by OHCHR. The aim of the decade is to strengthen actions and measures to eradicate injustice and promote the rights and the equal participation in society of people of African descent. In this regard, "An agenda for ten years", produced in the framework of the Decade, is to be published in English, French and Spanish in cooperation with OHCHR and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In October 2015, OHCHR held its fifth fellowship programme for people of African descent, a three-week training event that was attended by 11 fellows from Europe and North and South America.

11. Education about the history of the Holocaust and other genocides is also a starting point for the promotion of mutual understanding, providing a safe environment to address local traumatic issues. During the reporting period, major activities were organized in the framework of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, including exhibitions and the publication of material online. International cooperation was reinforced in the field and the capacity of stakeholders in education was developed through the creation of a UNESCO Latin American Network for Education on the Holocaust and Other Genocides, covering nine countries of the region. Seminars also took place involving nearly 30 countries representing all regions, while discussions were enhanced between countries of the former Yugoslavia for the creation of a permanent exhibition in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

12. The promotion of linguistic diversity also helps to foster mutual understanding. The focus of International Mother Language Day in February 2016 was the importance of the appropriate language of instruction in the early years of schooling to facilitate access to education and promote fairness for groups that speak minority and indigenous languages, in line with the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In July 2016, UNESCO and a Chinese educational information and communications technology company, Talkmate, also unveiled a four-year project to develop an online interactive World Atlas of Languages, based on the existing Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger maintained by UNESCO, to help safeguard the world's linguistic diversity and promote multilingualism in cyberspace. The promotion of languages is also being advanced at the national level. In Turkmenistan, OHCHR and the United Nations country team advocated a national human rights action plan, adopted in January 2016, that pledges to enable ethnic minorities to learn their mother tongue and culture and fosters their participation in decision-making.

III. Supporting reconciliation and peace efforts through dialogue

13. The number of major violent conflicts in the world has almost tripled since 2008 (see A/70/357-S/2015/682). Acts of violent extremism are also on the rise, and grave international concern about terrorism has given rise to several Security Council resolutions, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. With the aim of reversing the rising tide of violence, the Secretary-General has called for a more holistic, system-wide approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, with a stronger focus on prevention and mediation.

14. In a Presidential Statement issued on 11 May 2016, the Security Council requested that its Counter-Terrorism Committee present a proposal by 30 April 2017 for a "comprehensive international framework" on the response to terrorism, noting that terrorist groups crafted distorted narratives that are based on the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religion to justify violence (see S/PRST/2016/6). The Security Council also emphasized that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization and it underscored the importance of promoting tolerance and interreligious dialogue.

15. United Nations system entities have also provided logistical support for peacemaking during the reporting period. The United Nations Office at Geneva provided the setting for four mediation processes and high-level talks led by the United Nations, in 2015 and 2016, namely on the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya, Yemen and the Geneva international discussions, in cooperation with host country Switzerland. Further moves have been made to strengthen Geneva's role as a mediation hub with the deployment of a senior mediation officer to the Office at Geneva in 2015.

16. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been developing initiatives to counter radicalization in prisons and supporting Member States in the establishment of effective legal and administrative measures to counter terrorist narratives and to criminalize incitement to commit terrorism and terrorist propaganda, including on the Internet. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, while countering terrorism is crucial for building social cohesion. UNODC work with Member States to support their implementation of legal instruments related to terrorism contributes to this purpose. It has initiated assistance for the Sahel countries on criminal justice, with regard to children allegedly involved with Boko Haram, and has also developed a new initiative on capacity-building on the justice and security challenges concerning children associated with violent extremist groups.

Countering violent extremism on the ground

At the cutting edge of the effort to counter violent extremism, during the reporting period the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, part of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, along with UNESCO, implemented a year-long anti-terrorism project to promote a culture of peace, conflict management, citizenship, democracy and good governance in Burkina Faso. The programme, which ran up to September 2015 in the capital, Ouagadougou, and in the Northern Sahel Region, also provided training and awareness-raising on terrorism, targeting 50,000 young people and women in areas where there may be terrorist sleeper cells owing to the influx of refugees from Mali. The teaching tool was a reference manual on a culture of peace developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in coordination with the Dakar office of UNESCO. Some 3,000 copies were printed in six local languages for the purpose of the Burkina Faso project, which was funded by the Department of Political Affairs and implemented and monitored in collaboration with the Burkinabe National Commission for UNESCO, the Government of Burkina Faso, United nations entities, national and local non-governmental organizations and civil society.

17. In a significant move to establish peace as a right, at its thirty-second session, the Human Rights Council adopted the "Declaration on the Right to Peace", which recalls "the need for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs" (see Human Rights Council resolution 32/28). The Declaration will be considered by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

18. Changing perspectives on peace and how the United Nations system has contributed to the promotion of peace over the past 70 years are issues to be explored in a major inter-agency research project being conducted by UNESCO jointly with the Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona, Spain. Some 28 United Nations entities attended a consultative meeting, held in Geneva on 21 June 2016, and other United Nations system agencies and entities will be consulted at a follow-up meeting to be held in New York. A publication reporting the findings of the research will be launched on 21 September 2017, the International Day of Peace.

19. Africa is a special focus of work to support reconciliation and peace through dialogue. The need for such engagement is great in a continent where 9 of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions are based, where humanitarian crises frequently exacerbate the suffering caused by poverty and conflict. In the wake of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation signed in 2015 by the Government of Mali, the Platform Coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad coalition, UNESCO collaborated with United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali on the organization of a workshop in Bamako, in January 2016, to raise awareness among Malian youth about cultural heritage and the values of tolerance and peace that guarantee its preservation. The objective is to support the translation of the peace agreement into an actionable national programme to achieve lasting peace in Mali. A national forum for the launch of the programme is planned for 2016. The endeavours resonate with Security Council resolution 2295 (2016) on the situation in Mali.

20. Over the past decade, the involvement of young people in violence and extremist groups has led some to stigmatize youth as the perpetrators of violence. More than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected areas and most have little or no opportunity to have their voices heard. Bringing about stronger youth participation in peacebuilding was the theme of the first ever Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, held in Amman, in August 2015, an event convened by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UNFPA, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP. Some 200 young peacebuilders from 80 countries gathered with representatives of Member States, United Nations agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations and academia to define a new global agenda on youth, peace and security. The Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security, adopted at the end of the forum called for a strengthened policy framework to support youth in transforming conflict and promoting peace. The Security Council subsequently adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, which also calls for the participation and views of youth to be taken into account during the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, and for the institution of mechanisms involving youth to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

21. The Youth Solidarity Fund of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations provides support to youth-led organizations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East with the implementation of projects that advance its mandate of promoting long-term constructive relationships among people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. For example, with Youth Solidarity Fund backing, the Organization for Community Development in Pakistan has created 10 community protection groups, made up of 60 youths each, to reduce religious and cultural tension and

promote moderation and tolerance. "See things as your neighbour does", another Youth Solidarity Fund initiative, will bring together groups of young people from either side of the tension-ridden border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan at a 14-day intercultural summer camp, half of which will be held in Tajikistan and the other half in Kyrgyzstan. During the camp, participants will be trained to act as intercultural dialogue ambassadors in their respective communities.

22. As with youth, the international community has recognized for some time that women's participation is vital to achieving and sustaining peace, as exemplified by Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Placing women at the centre of peace initiatives

In a project in Burundi, where a decade of civil war claimed 300,000 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is supporting a network of 534 women mediators, who have been at the forefront of continuing post-conflict reconciliation and of efforts to prevent violence in the wake of elections, renewed human rights violations and the exodus of around 230,000 people last year. In this tense context, the Women Network for Peace and Dialogue has, by its own means, addressed more than 5,000 conflicts at the local level and initiated dialogues in 17 provinces with political actors, security forces and civil society. The mediators promote non-violence and dialogue and provide verifiable information to stop panic about rumours, such as rumours concerning the mass distribution of arms or orchestrated plans to kill civilians.

23. In keeping with the Organization's strategic focus on prevention, United Nations system entities working to support reconciliation and peace efforts through dialogue have also been facilitating the peaceful resolution of local disputes that could escalate into more serious conflict if left unchecked. In 2015 and 2016, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) facilitated political engagement at the local level to build capacity to locally manage intercommunal conflict, which is often resource-based and located in areas where there is competition for land between sedentary agriculture and livestock grazing. UNMISS also maps conflict areas and shares the information with other system entities.

24. In the Philippines' Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has helped to alleviate protracted armed conflict between Muslim and Buddhist communities through the implementation of a six-year strategic framework to promote inclusive growth and sustainable peace. FAO investment in connective infrastructure, human and social capital for smallholder farmers, training in agribusiness skills, fishing methods and seaweed farming and the provision of equipment and technology, have enabled populations to transition out of subsistence farming into more sustainable livelihoods. In that project and in others, FAO work has been grounded in community-based needs assessments and the identification of beneficiaries. Activities are targeted on the basis of capacity, cultural habits and vulnerability.

25. In Colombia, in October 2015, OHCHR brought together indigenous people from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and settlers with whom they are in conflict over land. Around 150 people attended a first meeting, which also involved the Government of Colombia and the Office of the High Presidential Adviser for Human Rights. In January 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution (2016) 2261 to establish a one-year political mission of unarmed international observers to monitor and verify the ceasefire between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army to end a civil war that has raged for half a century, the longest in Latin America. The ceasefire agreement was signed in Havana, in June 2016, in the framework of a tripartite mechanism set in place by the Secretary-General.

IV. Building a framework for commonly-shared values to foster social cohesion

26. Conflict, humanitarian crises and extreme poverty have damaged or destroyed the fabric of societies in many parts of the developing world, while nations everywhere are struggling to keep pace with fast-evolving social, technological and environmental change. All of those factors undermine social cohesion, the shared sense of belonging to a society that is also predicated upon trust of one's neighbours and of the government and its institutions.

27. Respect for human rights is fundamental to establishing and maintaining this trust. United Nations system entities involved in the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue have increasingly mainstreamed the principles of human rights in their work, since the Organization introduced its human rights-based approach to programming in 2003. Those efforts often focus on marginalized groups, particularly women and youth.

28. Underscoring how prominent this theme is across the whole of the United Nations system, the high-level political Forum on sustainable development, the central platform of the United Nations for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda, was convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, in New York, from 11 to 20 July 2016, and was devoted to the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind". The discussion focused on how to draw groups that are typically marginalized and left behind into decision-making processes.

29. "Living together in inclusive societies: a challenge and a goal" was the theme of the seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Baku from 25 to 27 April 2016. The event was organized in conjunction with UNESCO. Representatives of governments and international organizations as well as civil society actors shared ideas on how to achieve "inclusive living" in today's increasingly diverse societies.

Strengthening negotiation and mediation capacities

The New York office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research organized a two-day workshop, entitled "Multilateral negotiations: social cohesion and peaceful and inclusive societies", in June 2016. More than 40 delegates from Member States attended, as well as representatives of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. The first part of the workshop focused on negotiation techniques while the second part focused on the components of social cohesion and peaceful and inclusive societies. Discussions focused on the need to carry out governance reforms through inclusive dialogues in order to prevent political exclusion and to address today's challenges and ways of addressing the breakdown of trust in society, and on the need for effective counter-narrative strategies to prevent the spread of violent extremism while at the same time, promoting a sense of belonging at the local level to sustain peace.

30. Over the past two years, the Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (2014-2017), which was initiated by UNESCO and is funded by the European Union, has been empowering and building capacities of young people in the Middle East and North Africa, a part of the world where, in many countries, instability and economic crisis followed the fleeting optimism of the predominantly youth-led Arab Spring. The region has the world's highest rate of youth unemployment, at around 30 per cent. Levels of youth participation in civic and political life also remain low in the aftermath of the toppling of decades-old political regimes. Seven national networks of youth organizations have been established through that initiative, in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, State of Palestine and Tunisia, which have reached out to around 2,000 youths through key training and skills to become the change-makers, policy planners and leaders of the future. Participants have been taught policy analysis, strategic planning, results-based management and human rights and they have been using the newly-acquired skills to support governments in the development and revision of youth policies in their countries.

31. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has engaged at-risk youth in marginalized communities through sport and life development skills, as part of a new global initiative that the agency is leading to promote crime prevention. Pilot activities are scheduled to begin in Brazil later in 2016. In another human rights-based initiative that fosters social cohesion, UNODC works closely with religious leaders to raise awareness of and respond to human trafficking through its membership of the Santa Marta Group, a global alliance with the Catholic Church, international police chiefs and civil society. The aim is to improve victim support and foster better relations between law enforcement and civil society. The agency is also collaborating with faith-based organizations in the delivery of technical assistance, training national actors in Gambia in 2015 in conjunction with the Islamic Council and the Christian Council. Principles from the Koran have been used to support the non-punishment of victims of human trafficking and other good practices.

32. In an effort to influence attitudes towards shared values, UN-Women has increased its engagement with faith-based organizations in its work towards Goal 5

of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is noteworthy that the Commission on the Status of Women, in the agreed conclusions adopted at its sixtieth session, invited faith-based organizations to take action for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Numerous initiatives and activities have been launched with such organizations at regional and country levels, including the promotion of behavioural change in men, youth, clergy and communities to end domestic violence, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in Albania, Barbados, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, South Africa, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste. Women's political participation and leadership were promoted in Côte d'Ivoire, Myanmar and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Entity also engaged religious scholars to increase knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In Asia, through a three-year programme on implementing the Convention through gender-equitable interpretations and expressions of culture in India, Singapore and beyond, advocacy and capacity-building have also increased knowledge about the Convention among religious scholars, the media and grass-roots leaders. In the Philippines, female Muslim religious leaders and male religious scholars took part in activities led by UN-Women on the Regional Human Rights Commission, creating a space for dialogue around sensitive topics over which religious belief is sometimes perceived to be in conflict with international norms on women's rights and for the formulation of strategies for changing norms and cultures that discriminate against women.

33. Discrimination is very often targeted against migrants, whose numbers are greater today than ever before in history. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported, in June 2016, that the number of displaced people had reached the record figure of 65 million in 2015. A catalogue of tragic events in recent times has brought into sharp relief the terrible plight large numbers of them face. Many suffer human rights abuses in their country of origin, in transit and then again at their destination. The United Nations has appealed for the protection of the human rights of all migrants and called on governments to embrace migration as essential for inclusive and sustainable social and economic development. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly at its high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016, is an important step in the development of concerted action at the global level (see General Assembly resolution 71/1).

34. Municipal authorities can do much to promote mutual understanding and respect between populations that suddenly find themselves in close proximity to one another. The lead cities of all seven regions in the mobilization of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (formerly the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism), met for the first time to discuss action at the city level, in Bologna, Italy, on 17 and 18 April 2016. UNESCO and the International Coalition, in collaboration with the Foundation of Marianna V. Vardinoyannis, who is a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, are currently mapping how 19 cities around the world are dealing with influxes of migrants and refugees and compiling relevant "promising practices". A report, to be published shortly, will provide valuable insight into a phenomenon that presents challenges and opportunities to cities and towns all over the world.

Making worlds meet in Germany

In Berlin, negative attitudes towards migrants are being addressed by "Give Something Back to Berlin", a project that contributes to social cohesion and cultural dialogue by facilitating neighbourhood volunteer work for members of Berlin's rapidly-growing non-German speaking population. Migrants of around 50 nationalities are involved in the scheme, which won first prize among a total of 10 recipients of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization-led "BMW Group Award for Cultural Innovation" in 2016. Among the activities designed to bring the new arrivals into contact with Berliners, migrants take walks with local senior citizens, providing the latter with company while the former get to practice their German. The founder of the project, Annamaria Olsson, says: "Our dream is to continue making worlds meet all over the city and beyond".

V. Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural and interreligious dialogue through quality education and the media

35. Education and the media play key roles in ensuring that individuals and communities have the knowledge and tools needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other cultural or religious backgrounds. Quality education at all stages of life, in all settings and for all groups in society can stimulate critical thinking and foster values, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the development of more open and tolerant societies and create the conditions for dialogue. Outside the classroom or lecture hall, traditional media and, increasingly, the Internet and social media have become major, and often the main, sources of information about other cultures and religions. As well as having a profound influence on perceptions about other groups and communities, reinforcing or countering stereotypes, media can also serve to raise awareness and inform citizens of their rights.

36. United Nations system entities involved in education and media remain at the forefront of efforts to devise and hone policies and programmes that take into account the multiple contexts in which learning takes place and ideas are shaped, inside and outside the classroom, through the media and in the community. The ongoing strategic initiatives on education for sustainable development and on global citizenship education represent a paradigm shift in the approach to education, with their focus on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes conducive to participation in peaceful and sustainable societies.

37. To ensure that global citizenship education reaches populations in need, ECOWAS and UNESCO have produced a reference manual (see also sect. III) on the teaching of peace education, human rights, citizenship and democracy, that has been translated into 27 local West African languages. The manual was distributed under the ongoing peace and development project of ECOWAS, which is focusing on six in crisis or post-conflict countries in the region, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo. The project was funded by the African Development Bank.

Preventing violent extremism in the classroom

A key focus area of global citizenship education is the prevention of violent extremism. In April 2016, UNESCO published "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism", the first tool of its kind, which has been field tested at UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network in countries including Jordan and Kazakhstan and is now available online and in print. The guide provides advice on managing classroom discussions on violent extremism and how to help learners resist extremist narratives and acquire the social and emotional skills to engage constructively in society. Initiatives to help young people resist the call of terrorism were discussed at the first International Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education, held in New Delhi, on 19 and 20 September 2016.

38. Global citizenship education is also concerned with fostering intercultural dialogue. UNESCO has been working with universities in the Arab region to promote intercultural dialogue through the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue, which places a particular emphasis on youth participation, especially in countries affected by conflict. The programme continues to support 10 projects involving the revision and development of university and school curricula that counter stereotypes and promote understanding among people of different cultures.

39. In Lebanon, a consortium of universities has started offering accredited courses in the promotion of intercultural competence, the skills needed to adeptly navigate today's often culturally complex environments, as part of their social science degree programmes. A massive open online course is also currently under development and is scheduled to be launched in 2016.

40. To follow up on and assess the impact of such initiatives, in March 2016, the Statistical Commission approved a survey of all 195 member States of UNESCO, which will measure their implementation of education for sustainable development and on global citizenship education in order to produce a global indicator for Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 4.7. Questionnaires were sent out in June and the data will be analysed and reported to the Executive Board of UNESCO in 2017.

41. Information and communications technologies also have great potential to strengthen education for peace and sustainable development because they open up classrooms to the world, facilitate dialogue and provide access to multiple sources of information that can increase knowledge and understanding about other cultures, provided that increased connectivity is associated with the relevant skills and media literacy competence and draws on relevant local and multilingual content. To measure the extent to which such technologies are deployed to promote mutual understanding, UNESCO is currently mapping existing intercultural dialogue e-learning resources in the five regions of the world and exploring trends and challenges for more concrete focus in this domain. The mapping is part of an ambitious project funded by the Government of Azerbaijan to enhance the promotion of intercultural competence and cultural literacy in a globalized and

increasingly interconnected multicultural international landscape. Africa, where the technologies have enormous potential to promote intercultural dialogue, is a particular focus of the mapping exercise. The project is a contribution to the "Baku Process" and the related World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, the fourth edition of which will be held in 2017.

42. In today's digital age, the media and information literacy strategic initiative is helping to equip citizens with the ability to engage with media and develop their critical thinking while bolstering cultural literacy. In 2015, 500 young people all over the world successfully completed a four-month massive open online course on media and information literacy and intercultural dialogue. The topics explored included the ethical use of media, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, global citizenship, online hate content, freedom of expression and access to information, privacy and gender equality. To ensure such education reaches those who most urgently need it, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable to radicalization, the past year has seen the engagement in media and information literacy of local imams and grass-roots non-governmental organizations in several countries, including Nigeria, where the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy in Abuja has helped the initiative reach 30 youth organizations all over the country. A toolkit for media and information literacy that includes a curriculum for teachers, a global assessment framework and policy and strategy guidelines, is also being used to build capacities among policymakers and educators. UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations also initiated the University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue programme to promote teaching and research in media and information literacy.

43. To address the role of media in disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations launched the "SpreadNoHate" initiative, with a symposium held at Headquarters in New York, in December 2015. Participants explored the phenomenon of "hate speech" and its use in the treatment of migrants.

44. Ideosync and UNESCO partnered to develop a training manual to support community radio personnel's capacity to produce and broadcast migrant-sensitive programmes in source, transit and destination areas. A publication, "Internal migration: a manual for community radio stations", which was launched in 2015 on World Radio Day, is currently being distributed to community radio stations in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

45. Training and capacity-building for journalists in media literacy is also vital. The continued use of the "Model curricula for journalism education: a compendium of new syllabi", which has been translated into Chinese, French and Mongolian, is helping to develop journalistic knowledge and skills on peacebuilding, while media and information literacy and policy guidelines for journalism educators and newsrooms have also been widely circulated.

46. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information raised the visibility of United Nations work on intercultural and interreligious dialogue via its multilingual news platforms, its global network of United Nations information centres and outreach partners, celebrating international days through special activities and covering events such as the "Forum on the role of religious leaders in

preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes", held in Morocco in 2015, and the Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Azerbaijan in April 2016.

VI. Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, religious, social and cultural dimensions

47. The pursuit of sustainable development has significant potential to both contribute to and be enhanced by the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Climate change and related environmental issues, in particular, have emerged as a major unifying principle and purpose across societies, cultures and religions, as reflected recently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 2015 International Islamic Climate Change Symposium, and the meeting on "Faith in the Future", held in Bristol, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in September 2015. Demonstrating the power of environmental issues to unite leaders from different cultural and religious groups, 2015 also saw the publication of the Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change, the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, the encyclical letter of Pope Francis of June 2015, "*Laudato Si*: On Care for Our Common Home", the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change and the "Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council Statement".

48. Dialogue for sustainable development is being fostered through work on the establishment of cooperative mechanisms for the joint management of transboundary water systems by countries in post-conflict areas. The creation of new sovereign States after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia affected the way the Dinaric Karst Aquifers in the Balkan region were used for power-generation, agriculture and domestic consumption. Since the signature of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (since replaced by the Regional Cooperation Council) in 1999, bilateral agreements have been established to manage transboundary surface waters and hydropower developments and the Global Environment Facility-funded Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System project was implemented by UNESCO in 2010. A significant milestone was reached in 2015 with the formulation of a strategic action programme under which Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed to strengthen their cooperation through the establishment of a Consultation and Information Exchange Body as well as awareness-raising activities to make local populations take greater responsibility for sustainable management. This continued regional dialogue and cooperation are both an end in themselves and a means to achieve lasting sustainability of the shared water resources.

49. The promotion of intercultural dialogue for sustainable development was also enhanced by UNESCO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the joint organization of a seminar on environment, religion and culture, promoting intercultural dialogue for sustainable development, held in April 2016, 15 years after a seminar on the same theme was held in Tehran, in 2001. At the event, representatives and specialists of different cultures and religions discussed how culture and religion contributed to sustainable development and they explored the nexus between the three concepts. A document was published urging religious

leaders and faith-based organizations to actively promote a culture of peace in their work to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It called upon Member States to put culture at the heart of their efforts to find durable solutions for environmental challenges in a spirit of dialogue, understanding and respect for diversity.

50. In keeping with the need to "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" as called for in Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO is also fostering international dialogue to explore the ethical implications of global climate change for biological diversity, cultural diversity, global justice, international solidarity, resilience and durability through the work of its World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology, since 2005. Based on the extensive work that has been completed so far, during the thirty-eighth session of the General Conference, Member States requested UNESCO to prepare a preliminary text for a non-binding declaration on ethical principles in relation to climate change for the next General Conference, to be held in 2017. Such action is meant to complement the important work being carried out on climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNESCO will launch a broad and inclusive dialogue between member States, experts and stakeholders to this end.

World Bank develops faith initiative

Sustainable development is also being addressed in the economic arena, to combat poverty and build a future in which "no one is left behind" in the developed and developing worlds. The World Bank Group recognizes the importance of interreligious and interfaith dialogue as a critical vehicle for ending extreme poverty, boosting shared prosperity and promoting peace. The World Bank's Faith Initiative advances three interrelated goals, to strengthen dialogue and engagement with faith-based organizations, to foster greater operational collaboration and partnerships and to strengthen the evidence base on faith-based organizations' role and impact on the ground, including in projects funded by the World Bank. In July 2015, the World Bank hosted a conference in Washington, D.C., on "Religions and Sustainable Development: Building Effective Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty" organized jointly with German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Cooperation, the United States Agency for International Development and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, in partnership with the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and other faith-based organizations. In September 2015, the World Bank co-sponsored a high-level event before the opening of the seventieth session of the General Assembly with the inter-agency Task Force on Religion and Development, led by UNFPA, on the theme of "Meeting the moral imperative to end extreme poverty and realize the Sustainable Development Goals". Prior to the event, faith-based organizations and religious leaders launched a faith-based action framework to end extreme poverty and realize the Sustainable Development Goals", a tool to shape strategies for global, national and local faith-based organizations.

51. The goals of the 2030 Agenda, which have galvanized broad-based support, also provide an array of powerful incentives around which to build intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

52. The United Nations Population Fund is fostering dialogue and innovative partnerships with faith-based organizations, national multireligious mechanisms and religious traditional and indigenous leaders to build institutional capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda. At the global level, the Fund convenes a Task Force on Religion and Development, which acts as a consultative mechanism within the United Nations to host policy dialogues and convene faith-based partners around shared development and humanitarian challenges. Some 250 faith-based actors took part in a special session on religious engagement at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016. In an outcome document, faith-based actors called upon the international community to recognize and affirm their significant and often unique holistic contribution to humanitarian work, to consider them as equal partners in such work and to scale up efforts to support their contribution (see also A/71/353). They committed to serve people in the most vulnerable humanitarian settings, expand their response and counter attempts to link religion with violence, terrorism or exclusion. UNFPA also promoted intercultural and interreligious dialogue on women's and girls' rights and the sexual and reproductive rights of men and women in a wide array of partnerships with religious leaders, at both the regional and national levels, in all continents.

53. In an initiative that fosters dialogue for sustainable development while cutting across the entire spectrum of human rights, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is improving the effectiveness of the global fight against AIDS by engaging with civil society, including religious and cultural leaders, faith-based organizations and communities to overcome discrimination towards people with HIV. The initiative aims to improve access to health care for children, women, young people, sex workers and other marginalized groups with HIV. Dialogue for sustainable development has also been pursued by OHCHR through its support for the Government of Serbia's new Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2016-2025) and a draft law on housing, to secure ethnic diversity and inclusion. The Office also supported work on the development of a new United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Serbia that will uniquely include cultural development. In parallel, in May 2015, OHCHR worked with staff at the multi-ethnic media outlet Dostuk Radio, in Bishkek, the only outlet broadcasting in minority languages, to raise awareness of human and minority rights and in June 2015 it co-organized training for government officials on international human rights obligations in the context of combating radical religious extremism. Stakeholders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attended a regional expert meeting on freedom of religion or belief, held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, in July 2015, and drew up recommendations for their governments and international organizations on enhancing freedom of religion or belief.

54. There is also growing realization that sport as means to explore dialogue with other cultures can have an impact on development. The revision of the International Charter for Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015, for the first time acknowledges that

sport can play an important role in the realization of development, peace and post-conflict and post-disaster objectives.

VII. Conclusion

55. **United Nations system entities have implemented General Assembly resolutions 70/19 and 70/20 during the period under review against the backdrop of a shift in the Organization's approach to peace that has placed the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the very heart of the Organization's founding mission.**

56. **Acknowledging a "collective call for urgent change in how we conceive of our peace and security instruments, how we apply them and how we work together to maximize impact", the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the future of United Nations peace operations, issued in September 2015, stated that "we cannot respond to the number and intensity of today's crises by focusing only on conflict management. Prevention and mediation must return to the fore" (see A/70/357-S/2015/682).**

57. **Galvanized by this reframing of the Organization's response to peace and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both of which underscore the importance of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue and give fresh impetus to the ongoing International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), the United Nations agencies and entities involved in implementing General Assembly resolutions 70/19 and 70/20 have redoubled their efforts to work together to deliver more effective outcomes. As an example, an ongoing research project of UNESCO on the progress and challenges of the United Nations peace agenda over the past 70 years is the first major inter-agency consultation on such an essential topic. Research of this nature can and should make the work of the United Nations for peace more effective and efficient and it provides a means to bring the different components of the system closer together.**

58. **The project is part of a broader effort to scale up research activities during the Decade to produce global indicators that can ensure the delivery of more precisely targeted actions and, in a rapidly changing world, take account of both present and future needs and priorities. The focus on research ties in with the call for improved data to make informed decisions and ensure accountability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. United Nations system entities are also committed to tracking global progress on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and gauging nuances in regional, national and local perspectives in order to inform policy and better orient programming.**

59. **There is also a growing emphasis across the United Nations system on the need for the inclusive participation of a broad range of stakeholders in building and sustaining peace, as reflected in target 16.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for "responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making". Indeed, inclusion is mentioned in no fewer than 5 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Many of the**

programmes and projects cited in the present report closely involved governments, religious and civil society groups in both their design and implementation. Time and again, it has been the experience of the agencies involved that such inclusivity, in keeping with the system-wide focus, improves effectiveness and confers local ownership to ensure the sustainability of outcomes. In the culturally-sensitive domains of promoting a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in particular, there is no single pathway or model that will deliver results. Efforts must be built on cultural needs and on the local context and aspirations. As well as illustrating the extent to which youth and women are now included in the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the present report shows a marked trend among contributing United Nations agencies and entities towards initiatives at all levels that involve religious leaders, whose influence is very often decisive in shaping opinion.

60. The United Nations as a whole has made significant progress in constructing stronger global and regional partnerships to promote a culture of peace, instituting cooperation frameworks with the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States, as well as with other regional and international partners.

61. Partnerships with national governments remain a key priority, as governments have the primary responsibility to protect the human rights that underpin pluralistic, inclusive societies and to find the political solutions to prevent or resolve conflict. It is the role of United Nations agencies and entities to help build national capacity to that end.

62. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a solid framework to approach interlinked challenges in a holistic way, taking issues out of isolation and addressing the structural determinants that contribute to them. However, as parties scale up action to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, enhanced cooperation, capacity-building and access to financial and technical support will be needed to help many countries realize their targeted objectives.